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The Occupational Performance of the Sandwich Generation to Preserve their Health: A Scoping Review

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Introduction: Caregiving is a complex role with many rewarding experiences. With a burgeoning global ageing population, the informal provision of care increasingly falls to adult children most of whom are women. These middle-aged individuals find themselves frequently "sandwiched" between the competing needs of two generations: ageing parents and children. Research in the area is diverse and there is a lack of clarity on those at risk and the effective strategies used to preserve their occupational performance (OP) and health.

Objective: To provide clinicians with an enhanced knowledge of the Occupational Performance Issues (OPIs) of being a sandwich generation caregiver and identify those at risk, in order to provide additional support.

Methods/Approach: A scoping review identified the OPIs practice opportunities and strategies to help strained caregivers. The Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement (CMOPE) guided the development of the themes identified within the review.

Practice Implications: Heightening the awareness of occupational therapists (OTs) to OPIs facing the sandwich generation can increase the early recognition of caregivers who are struggling and subsequently initiate support so they remain engaged in their personal occupations. Planned engagement in self-preserving occupations promotes their health.

Conclusion: OTs have a responsibility to acknowledge and address the needs of their secondary clients (informal caregivers) because their health directly affects the quality of care given to their parents (OT's primary clients). Participants' gained deeper understanding of the dynamic caregiver-care-recipient relationship, positions the profession to make far-reaching impacts on the quality and sustainability of informal caregiving.